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April 1.

The President, Dr. **Ruschenberger**, in the chair.

Twenty-nine members present.

The following paper was presented for publication:—

"On the Affinities of the Sirenians." By Theo. Gill.

Dr. **Leidy** presented an interesting specimen of bituminous coal from the mines of the Westmoreland Coal Company, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. This specimen is a gift to the museum, from George C. Hewett, Esq., Mining Engineer, who furnishes the following details: The seam from which the specimen is taken is noted for its regularity and freedom from faults. Occasional cracks, however, occur sometimes several hundred feet in length. In these cracks incrustations of iron pyrites are found in various forms, of which an unusual one is shown in the present specimen, viz., in the form of stalactical prolongations. The remaining portions of the vein consist of remarkably pure coal especially suited for the manufacture of illuminating gas.

Prof. **Leidy** remarked that the rat presented this evening by Mr. L. Fussel was a specimen of the Black Rat, or Mus rattus, which had been caught on board a ship in the vicinity of the city. This rat is exceedingly rare, but is said to have once been common enough, and is also said to have been nearly exterminated by the common brown or Norway Rat.

Prof. Leidy also exhibited a specimen of iron ore, recently sent to him by Dr. George W. Lawrence, of Hot Springs, Ark. It was the mineral Dufreynite, and was found in Polk Co., Ark.

April 8.

The President, Dr. **Ruschenberger**, in the chair.

Twenty-eight members present.

Dr. **LeConte** announced the death, at Davidsburg, York Co., Pa., on the 10th March, of Friedrich Ernest Melsheimer, M.D., a correspondent of the Academy, aged nearly ninety-one years. He inherited great taste for entomology from his father, E. F. Melsheimer, a clergyman, who cultivated natural science with much success, and not only was a highly esteemed correspondent of Knoch and other European entomologists of the end of the past and beginning of the present century, but an active collaborator with Say, the founder of descriptive entomology in the United States.

Dr. Melsheimer thus inheriting the tastes and the collection of his father, has preserved, for later investigators, the only authentic types of many of Mr. Say's species; and has also contributed no small proportion of the descriptions of Coleoptera, which appeared up to February, 1847. His memoirs on this subject, containing notes and descriptions of about four hundred and fifty-seven species, were printed in the 2d and 3d vols. of the proceedings of this Academy.

Entomology also owes to him the catalogue of the described Coleoptera of the United States, which, after revision by Prof. S. S. Haldeman and myself, was published by the Smithsonian Institution in 1853. It was the first work of bibliographical importance in the modern history of that branch of science, and gave a powerful impetus to its development in the United States, and has greatly diminished the labor of those who have continued the study of that department.

Living an isolated life on his farm, remote from usual lines of travel, dependent almost entirely on letters for the sympathy and counsel of his fellow students, separated from libraries containing the results of modern research, and therefore dependent on the traditional knowledge received from Europe, which constituted in fact most of the intellectual capital of the founders of natural history in the United States, Dr. Melsheimer must be considered as a very remarkable instance of one who, with very limited opportunities, has worked honestly, to the extent of his abilities, to develop the powers of usefulness which were given him.

Modest, unpretending, affectionate to his family, devoted to his friends, industrious to the limit of human usefulness, his death, at such an advanced age, can only leave, with those who have enjoyed his acquaintance, a satisfaction that they have known so good a representative of the purer qualities of humanity.

The following letter, on the introduction of the California Salmon, was read by Prof. Cope:—

HARRISBURG, Pa., March 11, 1873.

MY DEAR SIR: Supposing you might feel some interest in the matter, I propose to give you a short account of the introduction of the California Salmon, which I hope it will be my good fortune to be able years hence to say I effected on the third of this present month.

Professor Baird, U. S. Com. of Fisheries, employed last summer Mr. Livingston Stone, of Rhode Island, to procure the spawn of some California Salmon. They have been called Sacramento Salmon; and I believe the spawn were obtained from that stream or one of its branches.

Dr. Slack obtained just sixty-nine hundred young; they thrived and got on very well in his preserves till about the 18th of February, when he found that they could not be preserved in the small space at his disposal for them and they began to die from confinement.

I had previously arranged with Mr. Baird that these fish should be deposited in the Susquehanna—a gift from the Government to Pennsylvania—so Dr. Slack said I must get ready as soon as possible, as he feared the mortality amongst them might spread. The weather was so warm that we could not move them until the 3d inst. as stated—by which time the loss had reached to one hundred and fifty individuals. They were transported across from New Jersey, about seven miles from Easton, to Harrisburg on the day named, and I had them placed in the water in an air hole in the ice close to the shore at Harrisburg—about one hundred died on the passage—about fifty were much weakened by the journey but recovered in a few minutes after reaching the new water. But the balance, the healthy ones, immediately made for the current, and disappeared under the ice with as much energy as if they were native to our Susquehanna.

The water, when they entered, was 36° Fahr. at the time, but the river bottom is full of springs at which they could warm themselves. Had I the least idea that there was no description of them, I should have noted their peculiarities in my unscientific way more particularly, but as it is the above is the best description I can give you of them. Dr. Slack, I believe, fed them after they had parted with their yolk sack; but I concluded, from my own judgment, that the best thing I could do was to trust them to the magnificent Susquehanna. The energy with which the healthy ones put out leads me to hope that they will live if not devoured by enemies; but should they die we can repeat the experiment with a larger quantity hereafter.

Your obedient servant,
JAMES WORRALL.

Prof. E. D. Cope,
Philadelphia.

April 15.

The President, Dr. Ruschenberger, in the chair.

Twenty-five members present.

The following paper was presented for publication:—

"Observations on a change of Structure of a Larva of Dryocampa Imperialis." By Thos. G. Gentry.

Remarks on Extinct Mammals from California.—Prof. Leidy directed attention to some fossils, which he had borrowed, through